



KANSAS CITY MISSOURI POLICE DEPARTMENT

# NARCOTICS & VICE QUARTERLY

2nd Quarter 2014

April 1—June 30, 2014

## Vice Section targets human traffickers

Members of the Vice Section continue to innovate and use creativity in their attempts to investigate human trafficking cases, and their work has paid off in the last several months.

As the electronic world evolves, so do the detectives. Human trafficking investigations come to the Vice Section in a variety of ways. Sometimes they are brought forth from an anonymous tip or during a routine prostitution sting operation. There are, however, times when we must become creative in identifying and arresting suspects. The proactive methods used by members of the Vice Section involve months of covert efforts that sometimes result in a dead end. Spring 2014 yielded

great rewards for their continued long-term proactive efforts with the arrest of two individuals who traveled a long distance to victimize young children.

John P. Christian, 40, began conversing electronically with Detective Harmon months before he decided to travel from Austin, Texas, to Kansas City, on March 1, 2014. Christian was attempting to meet two under-age sisters, ages 12 and 16, for the purpose of paying for time with them. Detective Harmon posed as the fictitious girls' father. Christian brought many gifts with him for the children, including underwear, stuffed animals, jewelry and iPods.



**John P. Christian, left, and Abdul Gamble came to Kansas City from Texas and Oregon, respectively, to pay to have sex with young girls.**

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## Dealers get charged with deaths from heroin overdoses

Detectives and federal prosecutors are pursuing new kinds of charges against drug dealers when someone dies as a result of the drugs they've distributed.

Fourteen people in Kansas City died from a heroin overdose in 2013, and seven more have died from it so far this year. Detectives are now investigating where those users got their heroin, and the suppliers are being charged in federal court with contributing to the wrongful death of the overdose victims.

"We're one of the few agencies who track it, let alone investigate it," Sergeant Chris Ceseña said.

That work is paying off. On April 1, a jury found 33-year-old Timothy Kirlin guilty on nine different counts, including "heroin causing death" of a 29-year-old Kansas City man. Kirlin was a ring-leader of a group of 11 people who were convicted of distributing controlled substances, including heroin. Four of them, in addition



**Interdiction detectives intercepted this heroin coming into Kansas City that was sewn into a suitcase lining. Detectives are now pursuing charges against dealers when an overdose kills one of their users.**

to Kirlin, also were charged for contributing to the death of two other Kansas City residents.

For 10 years, Kirlin made monthly bus trips to Dallas and returned with large quantities of black tar heroin (anywhere from 4 ounces to half a pound), sometimes hiding it in his rectum, which he and his associates then distributed in Kansas City. Kirlin is awaiting sentencing and faces 30 years to life in federal prison.

Sergeant Ceseña said he and his detectives have so far identified two suspected suppliers in some of the 14

heroin overdose deaths from 2013. They continue to investigate the other cases.

Kansas City started seeing heroin overdose deaths in 2008,

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## Firearms Recovered 2014 2nd Quarter

Type of Firearm	2nd Quarter Total
Explosive Device	0
Rifle/ Shotgun	9
Assault Weapon	4
Hand Gun	56

## Prostitution Arrests

Type of arrest	2nd Quarter
Patronizing	20
Promoting	5
Solicitation	45

## Business Checks

Type of checks	2nd Quarter
Liquor checks	123
Liquor check arrests	10

## Human Trafficking

2nd Quarter	
Active Cases	12

## Clandestine Lab Seizures

Lab Seizures	2nd Quarter
Meth Labs	3
Marijuana Grow Ops	3

## Narcotics Seizures

Type of Narcotic	2nd Quarter Total
Cocaine	334.3 (ounces)
Marijuana	24,938 (ounces)
Meth	1,882.7 (ounces)
Heroin	372.19 (ounces)
Ecstasy/Thizz	415 (pills)
Prescription Drugs	602 (pills)

## Value of Recoveries

\$ Amount of Recovery	2nd QUARTER TOTAL
Narcotics	\$21,519,300.00
Cash	\$337,913.00



# Heroin use often starts with prescriptions

As officials continue to crack down on opiate-based painkillers, users are increasingly turning to heroin.

"In 2010, pharmacies tightened up regulations, and we and our federal partners increased enforcement on fraudulent prescriptions," said Sergeant Chris Ceseña of the Drug Enforcement Unit. "That left an open void for addicts. Drug cartels know that and see the market for it, so boom, heroin spike."

Last year, KCPD worked 20 fraudulent prescription cases, and they've had eight so far in 2014.

But KCPD detectives have recovered 14,118 grams of heroin in the first half of this year. In 2010, they recovered just 94 grams the entire year. A gram of heroin sells for about \$100 to \$150.

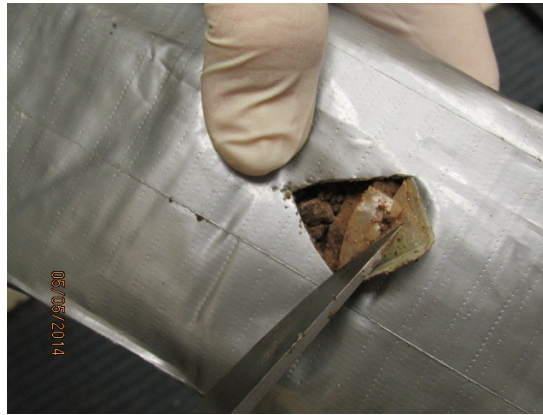
Most heroin users start with opiate-based painkillers like Oxycontin, some of which are legitimately prescribed after an injury or surgery. Now that people are having a more difficult time obtaining it, they're switching to heroin.

"It's a big step going from pills to heroin," Sergeant Ceseña said, but many people will take that step after they've formed a pain pill addiction.

"Heroin is not a typical drug," he said.

Most local heroin users are younger, wealthier and more suburban than users of other drugs like cocaine, PCP or methamphetamine. Sergeant Ceseña said that instead of starting in the urban core and working its way out to suburban communities like most drugs, heroin is going the other way around.

The resurgence has caused police to aggressively step up their enforcement efforts by targeting people who are importing



and selling heroin.

Most of Kansas City's heroin comes in black tar form, with some brown powder. It's largely imported from Texas, California and southwestern states after being smuggled in from Mexico. Police see that most Kansas City users mix the drug with a liquid and inject it, although some snort it, smoke it or put it in a clear gel capsule and swallow it.

Sergeant Ceseña said heroin is one of the most dangerous drugs for the human body. It causes fast addiction

and bodily dependence, making users violently ill if they go without it. Heroin also can be deadly [See "Dealers get charged with deaths from heroin overdoses," p. 1].

The tell-tale signs of a heroin user include:

- Sudden and regular changes in mood
- Secretive behavior
- Change in sleep patterns
- Morning sickness, diarrhea and constipation
- Nodding or sleeping sitting up
- Cigarette burns on their clothes/carpet/furniture
- Evidence of drug use, such as scorched pieces of tin foil, burnt spoons, needles and so on
- Lack of money with no evidence of things being bought
- Missing work or school
- Spending time with people who use heroin.

## HEROIN, Cont. from p. 1

Sergeant Ceseña said. This was around the time federal and local agencies started cracking down on opiate painkillers, which contain similar ingredients. [See "Heroin use often starts with prescriptions," above.]

Sergeant Ceseña has seen at least three heroin overdose victims with needles still in their arms, much like how actor Philip Seymour Hoffman was found dead in his New York home on Feb. 2. His death brought the issue of heroin overdoses to the forefront.

And also like Hoffman, many of Kansas City's overdose victims had a cocktail of drugs in their systems when they died.



**A federal jury convicted Timothy Kirlin in April of heroin trafficking resulting in death.**

"The toxicology reports usually show heroin as a contributing factor," Sergeant Ceseña said. "There also are usually multiple opiate-based pain killers in their system. And nearly all of them had the gateway drug, marijuana, in their systems at the time of death."

The Kansas City Missouri Fire Department carries Narcan, a life-saving drug that is an antidote for opiate overdoses if administered in time. Some police departments around the country are beginning to do the same.

KCPD is researching whether it should carry emergency overdose kits containing Narcan.

**"We're one of the few agencies who track overdose deaths, let alone investigate them."**

**- Sergeant Chris Ceseña**

**Drug Enforcement Unit**

Sergeant Ceseña said Kansas City remains a clandestine heroin market, meaning users typically get their drugs from people they know and from cell phone-organized meet-ups with high-level dealers. Areas like St. Louis, Baltimore and the northeastern United States experience a more open-air market where users can buy from street-level dealers. Because of the increased availability, those cities are experiencing more heroin-overdose deaths.



## Canines intercept drug traffickers

Four canines help the detectives of the Interdiction Section sniff out drugs being brought into or through Kansas City by traffickers. The dogs often find large quantities that suspects have tried to hide in luggage and boxes. The dogs' names are, clockwise from left: Wendy, Zina, Bennett and Naomi. All are female except Bennett. Unlike patrol dogs, they are generally friendly with people. This is good, because they often work in mass transit hubs where many people are coming and going. Below, Zina displays one of her finds: 5.6 pounds of heroin sewn into the lining of a suitcase.



### HUMAN TRAFFICKING, Cont. from p. 1

This is often done to bribe the children. Police also found a journal in his hotel room. The journal contained disturbing notes on what he had planned to do with the children. He was arrested as he arrived to meet the young children at their apartment and was eventually charged federally for child trafficking and child enticement. He was additionally charged in Clay County for attempted first-degree statutory rape of a child and second-degree statutory rape of a child.

Abdul Gamble, 39, was living in LaGrange, Ore., when he reached out to Detective Mills, whom he thought was the mother of 11- and 15-year-old girls. Detective Mills continued to talk to him covertly through e-mail for several months. Gamble arrived in Kansas City on a Greyhound bus on April 9, 2014, to meet with what he thought were the 11- and 15-year-old girls. He had plans to take up residence in Kansas City for a continued

relationship with the young girls. He brought with him items to give to the children and was arrested during a stop he wanted to make to buy condoms. Gamble was charged federally with two counts of child enticement and two counts of human trafficking of a child. As a result of this arrest, and further investigation, there is information to believe that Gamble may be responsible for the victimization of other children across the United States, including his own.

The Vice Section continues to work human trafficking investigations both proactive and reactive manners. Unfortunately, the aforementioned cases are not particularly unique, as individuals are now finding more innovative ways to victimize children. Vice Section detectives who investigate these crimes, however, continue to stay one step ahead of the suspects who prey upon the children of the world.

## Report Suspected Narcotics Activity

- Call 816-474-DRUG
- Call the Drug Enforcement Unit at 816-482-2900
- Send an e-mail to [drugs@kcpd.org](mailto:drugs@kcpd.org)

*If you have questions or want more information about anything in this newsletter, e-mail [drugs@kcpd.org](mailto:drugs@kcpd.org)*